

appropriated during the bitter contests of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, being held as a fortress by the Frangepani family, until wrested from them by the rival faction of the Anibaldi family. G. R. F.

(To be continued.)

DECORATIVE ART SOCIETY.

On Wednesday, 25th ult., a paper "On Gilding" was read by Mr. Proctor, explaining the various processes adopted respectively in gilding metal, wood, and composition; with remarks on the use and abuse of the art in interior decoration.

The paper was followed by an animated discussion.

On Wednesday the 9th inst., the first part of a paper "On Paper-hangings" will be read.

THE EMBANKMENT OF THE THAMES.

THE following is a copy of a letter from the Earl of Lincoln to the Lord Mayor, with the plan for the embankment of the River Thames between Battersea and Vauxhall Bridges:—

"I, Whitehall-place, August, 1844.

"My Lord,—As chairman of the Commissioners appointed by her Majesty 'for inquiring into and considering the most effectual means of improving the metropolis, and of providing increased facilities of communication within the same,' I have the honour to transmit to your lordship herewith, for the information of the corporation of London, as the body intrusted with the conservancy of the river Thames, a plan which it is their intention to recommend to the favourable consideration of her Majesty for the embankment of its northern shore, between Battersea and Vauxhall Bridges; and I am to add, that it will be very satisfactory to the Commissioners to have the concurrence of the conservators in a measure which has been framed as much in reference to the improvement of the navigation of the river, as to the many other advantages of which an embankment in that locality is obviously susceptible.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
"LINCOLN."

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE TOWER.

AFTER considerable delay, preparations commenced last week for the extensive improvements about to be made in the Tower, agreeably to plans submitted to, and approved of, by the Government. Barracks are to be built on the site of the small armouries which were destroyed by fire in 1841, but as their width will be greater than the late buildings, the frontage of the new barracks will encroach several feet upon the consecrated ground extending eastward from the Royal Chapel of St. Peter, in which are deposited the mortal remains of many distinguished and respected personages. Their hallowed remains are, however, to be carefully raised and placed in a vault at the rear of the Royal Chapel, and for that purpose a wooden barricade, to be covered, is now in course of erection (to prevent the idle gaze of the public) on the parade at the White Tower. When this solemn duty is completed, the erection of the barracks will commence, along with many other improvements in the garrison; for which a grant of money was included in the estimates last session of Parliament. The alterations in the Jewel-office proceed with small pace rapidly; to the great disappointment of strangers visiting the Tower desirous of viewing the Crown jewels, &c., recently deposited in the Haymarket. Notwithstanding the abolition of fees from visitors to the wardens, in lieu of which they receive full compensation, these worthies seldom or ever refuse to accept a gratuity when it is tendered to them; they, in fact, expect something, and if disappointed, their snarling propensities are not unfrequently exercised. We believe his Grace the Duke of Wellington, who is Constable of the Tower, is totally ignorant of these illegal practices. The member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), who exerted himself in getting the charges for the admission of the public to the Armouries and Jewel-office greatly reduced, and the wardens' perquisites entirely abolished, should inquire into the matter.—Times.



HAMBURG MEDAL, COMMEMORATIVE OF THE FIRE IN 1842.

THE above is a representation of a medal, lately struck by order of the authorities of Hamburg, to commemorate the dreadful fire which took place there on Thursday, the 5th of May, 1842. The impression, which has been kindly forwarded to us, was, as the inscription on the edge of it states, "Struck out of the copper from the tower of the church dedicated to Saint Peter in Hamburg." On the obverse is a representation of St. Peter's Church as it existed before the fire, with an inscription, of which the following is a translation:—"The design of benevolent patrons accomplished the first building of this church in their lifetime," or "The piety of our Forefathers built thee in their lifetime. 1342—1516."

The reverse represents the same church in ruins, as it appeared after the fire, and has this inscription:—"United powers (or public feeling) will worthily restore thee." (i.e. the ruin), to which is added, "Destroyed by fire on the 5th of May, 1842," and the artist's name, "Wilkins, Bremen."

As a specimen of die-sinking, it is beautiful and finished. If our information be correct, copies of the medal have been sent to those persons who took the most lively interest in, and most liberally relieved the sufferings of, the distressed inhabitants during their severe trials while destitute of home, food, and clothing.

St. Peter's Church was considered one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in northern Germany. It was situated in the north-west corner of the cathedral place, and was built between the years 1139 and 1195. Its length was 225 feet, and its breadth 135 feet. The steeple, which was begun in 1342, and finished in 1516, was 416 feet high. It had two chimes of bells, one of which was put in motion by the clock machinery, and played every half-hour; the other was played by means of keys at certain times of the day, and on particular occasions, by a person specially appointed for that purpose. Downes, in his "Letters from Mecklenburgh and Holstein," 1822, while describing Hamburg, thus refers to these bells: "I was awakened by the sweetest of all sweet harmonies issuing from the belfry of one of the churches. It was neither ringing nor chiming, but a regular piece of composition, first and second."

The interior of the church was overloaded with monuments, paintings, carvings, and stained windows. The subject of one of the oldest paintings was Hamburg in the 15th century, in the foreground of which was represented the sacrilegious attempt of Heliogorus; it hung behind the pulpit, and had been there ever since 1554. In the nave hung portraits of Martin Luther and his friend Melancthon. Near the font was another painting of Hamburg in 1250, on which might be perceived three churches, two convents, and St. George's Hospital. The altar-piece was painted by S. Bendixen, in 1814; it represented our Saviour appearing to Peter while performing his devotions.

The calamity which Hamburg sustained by the awful fire in 1842, was unequalled in extent except by the fire of London: the heart of the town was reduced to a heap of ashes. Many years must elapse before the damage can be repaired, and

the traces of it effaced. The conflagration broke out in the Deichstrasse, near the Elbe, on Thursday, May 5, from what cause is unknown, and raged until the following Sunday, in spite of all efforts to oppose it, spreading, and widening as it spread, until it had involved in destruction two sides of the Alster Basin, levelling almost all the buildings, public and private, over an area of 12 acres, nearly in the form of a triangle, sweeping down 1,749 houses, 61 streets, besides courts and alleys, and even crossing the broad canal of the Alster. The attempts made to arrest the flames, when the engines had proved useless, were, first to pull down the houses; but in unroofing them, the timbers and rafters were laid open, and more readily caught fire from the sparks lodged in them; artillery was next employed to batter them down, but the balls only made holes in the walls, and passed through. Finally, the plan of blowing them up with gunpowder was resorted to, and this useful but dangerous task was executed by the English engineer Lindley, who fortunately for the town was present at the time, and understood the proper mode of proceeding. The first check was given to the fire by blowing up the Rathhaus, in whose cellars were deposited all the treasures of the state in silver bars. The churches of St. Peter, St. Nicholas, and St. Gertrude were speedily consumed. The New Exchange, though surrounded by the flames, by a miracle escaped almost uninjured. The sympathy caused by this event in all parts of the globe was proved by the voluntary subscription raised for the sufferers, amounting to 270,000*l.*, of which England contributed 41,000*l.*

Hamburg will profit to a certain extent, by the calamity, in the improvements which will be introduced in laying out the new buildings, the widening of streets, the construction of sewers, and the fitting up of some of the stagnant fleeths or ditches.

The plan of these improvements has been prepared by Mr. Lindley. A new and handsome Rathhaus is to be built on one side of a new square, fronting the Borse. Another improvement is the drainage and conversion into a new quarter of the town of a low marshy tract on the right bank of the Elbe called Hammerbrook. It has been intersected by canals, the water pumped out by a steam-engine, the surface raised 4 feet over a space of an English square mile.

A correspondent, in a letter dated Hamburg, September 27, 1844, thus writes on the improvements now making in the city:—"Hamburg is progressing daily; new streets continue to be marked out, and new buildings arise so rapidly, that it is necessary to perambulate the city frequently to keep up one's topographical knowledge. A custom prevails amongst the builders, on completion of the shell of any house, to give a kind of fête within it to the workmen employed. The building is hung over with flags and festoons, and a band of music is engaged for the occasion. The workpeople are plentifully regaled with the good things of this life; they eat and drink to the sound of the fiddle, bass viol, and sundry horns, and then begin their favourite waltz; the reel is not attempted until it is time to depart, and it is then the favourite dance of all as they wend their way through the streets homeward."